

The Dynamics of Obedience

Carl H. Stevens Jr. is pastor of Greater Grace World Outreach located in Baltimore, Maryland. Pastor Stevens is also chancellor of Maryland Bible College & Seminary and host of the international Christian radio program "The Grace Hour." This booklet was created from a message preached by Pastor Stevens.

Pastor Stevens can be seen weekly on cable television stations throughout the United States. Call us for information regarding programming in your area.

All Scripture quotations, unless otherwise noted, are from the King James Version. Italics for emphasis are ours.

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INTRODUCTION

“...Hath the LORD as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of the LORD? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams” (1 Samuel 15:22).

Obedience to God’s Word is so vital for God’s people to understand. We may have the mistaken impression that obedience is simply doing what we are told to do; however, it is far more than that in the economy of God.

Obedience contributes to our practical sanctification in the Holy Spirit. Obedience to God’s Word is the key to every thought, the key to every relationship, the key to every friendship. The key to everything that brings us intimacy with God is obedience.

Many Christians need a transformation in the area of obedience. What is needed is a total restructure of the soul—the mind, the emotions, the conscience, the self-consciousness, and the

free volition.

As this booklet will show, real obedience leaves the door open for me to be filled with God's love. Obedience gives me a love for everyone, even for my enemies. Obedience releases love. Obedience expresses integrity. Obedience reveals the divine patience of God.

Chapter One

OBSESSIONS AND COMPLAINTS

“As soon as they hear of me, they shall obey me: the strangers shall submit themselves unto me” (Psalm 18:44).

The business of practical Christianity can be summed up in one word—obedience. It is extremely sad when people become obsessed with a problem. They may be very right in their premises, but they are so wrong in their presuppositions.

Allow me to illustrate this. Suppose that a certain person feels that another person has hurt him. Perhaps they are married, and she constantly runs him down. The same problems come up, over and over again. Now, it is not wrong for him to seek counsel to get some of these problems out in the open. It is understandable and acceptable.

Feeding on Ashes

“He feedeth on ashes: a deceived heart hath turned him aside, that he cannot deliver his soul, nor say, Is there not a lie in my right hand?” (Isaiah 44:20).

Yet, a problem can develop if a person becomes obsessed with trying to manufacture his own solution. He tries to manipulate the situation to get what he wants, based upon the fact that he has been hurt by another’s wrong doing. The next thing you know, a “friend” comes along and these two enter into an agreement. They determine how they are going to deal with it, but they are operating outside of obedience to God’s truth. From that day forward, these friends feed on ashes.

The “friend” doesn’t mind listening to the whole story repeated day in and day out. They pray together. Now, the person who caused the offense may be guilty, but these two friends are guilty of one of the sins that God hates—the sins of the tongue.

“These six things doth the LORD hate: yea, seven are an abomination unto him:

“A proud look, a lying tongue, and hands that shed innocent blood,

“An heart that deviseth wicked imaginations, feet that be swift in running to mischief,

“A false witness that speaketh lies, and he that soweth discord among brethren” (Proverbs 6:16-19).

What these people need is a total cleansing of the unconscious mind and a new filling of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit does the purging by the Blood of the Lamb (see Hebrews 9:14). Then, they need to stop talking and to stop blaming others for what has happened to them.

Too Much Talk

Often, people will judge an overseeing pastor for not punishing people. First of all, he is not God. Secondly, there is no church in the world that has perfect people. One group will be imperfect on this day and another group will be imperfect tomorrow. A church leader is constantly involved in people's problems; but ultimately, talking about the problems does not bring changes. It simply reinforces the judgment upon the other party.

Consider this: God never turned away Abraham, nor did He turn away David. Still, there are people who would go to God and say, “I have read the Bible, and I don't like that you let

Abraham get away with what he did with Hagar. Why did you make him the father of my faith when he did such a thing? And don't get me started about David! He multiplied wives and then he went and took Bathsheba for himself and arranged for her husband to be killed in battle. I don't appreciate that you will allow this man, of all people, to be the prince during the Millennial Reign on earth. That is not fair."

Do you think God would listen to such complaints?

This is how some people operate in the church. One has something against this usher. Another has something against the day school. I get notes all the time from people who wonder why the church is letting someone get away with something. I cannot find it anywhere in the Bible where the church is supposed to be running people's lives.

I suppose we should complain to Jesus about Peter. "Don't tell me, God, that you are going to let Peter get away with denying you three times. If you let him get away with this, then I am not going to follow you anymore."

"By the way," God answers, "I am going to let Peter get away with it. I have forgiven him completely. His sin is all paid for. I am going to

get Peter back, and he is going to feed My sheep and My lambs.”

“But God, shouldn’t we wait until he has proven himself? Shouldn’t we see if he is right with You?”

You may be laughing at the nature of such a conversation. But this is exactly how some people in churches act. “I don’t think this teacher is right. He is not treating my child right.” “No one understands what is wrong with my husband.” The problem is that they will not accept what God has allowed, and instead of seeking His heart, they are seeking judgment.

Let God Deal with Situations

We are not God. We have been taught to live and let live, unless the situation is affecting the table of organization. Now, if there really is a problem with a church officer or someone on the staff, then we are to deal with the situation in grace, according to truth, and under the doctrine of privacy and confidentiality.

I cannot stand in judgment of anyone. We stand before God and not others (Romans 14:4). We cannot look into another person’s heart. Even if someone failed this very day, I do not know what is going on with him. He may go

home to cry and weep. He may be so sad over his failure and completely repent before God.

Someone came to me last week and said, "Do know you that this person is doing this?"

"Were you there?" I asked.

"No, but my best friend told me that this is what happened."

The Response of Obedience

The person telling me was not there, and I was not there, but he wanted me to know just how awful it was for that person to do this thing. What was the response of obedience? I told him to go and get the person who was accused and with him there and me there, he could say just what he said, but in the other party's presence.

Obedience to the Word of God is the result of our sanctification by the Holy Spirit (1 Peter 1:2). The key to every thought, the key to every relationship, the key to every friendship, the key to intimacy with God is that we live in obedience.

We need a transformation in obedience. What is necessary is a total restructure of the soul—the mind, the emotions, the conscience, the self-consciousness, and the free volition.

Chapter Two

GETTING OFF TO THE RIGHT START

A Christian should start each day with a plan to be obedient. For instance, this morning I began by saying, "Father, there is one thing I would like to do right now, and that is to say, 'Hello.'" Why I am telling you this? Because I want to show you just how simple it is to have intimacy with God.

So I simply start my mornings this way.

"Father, I want to say hello to you. Jesus, good morning. Welcome, precious Holy Spirit. Would You fill me right now? And, Father, the one thing I want more than anything in the world is for You to keep me from falling. You promised to do this, so I am asking you, please keep me from falling. It is so easy for me to fall mentally."

Now, I am not even speaking about falling into lust, defilement, cheating, or lying. But, if I

go five hours without communicating with Jesus, if I go that amount of time without talking to Him, then I have begun to backslide.

The key for each of us is to say to God, "Keep me from falling. Help me, Lord, as I stand in Your grace. Father, give me a spirit of obedience."

Piercing the Darkness

The demonic forces work so hard trying to pierce our obedience. Consider Gethsemane, where Jesus sweat great drops of blood through his pores. He was under a severe supernatural attack as Satan battled to keep Him from Calvary. The disciples were there to pray, but they became dull and went to sleep because of the intensity of the warfare. A supernatural piercing was happening throughout that garden.

Yet, Jesus endured and went to the Cross according to the divine will and purpose of God. That piercing at Gethsemane was fierce, but it did not stop Him.

The apostle Paul referred to his thorn in the flesh as a messenger of Satan to keep him humble. This thorn, I believe, was an actual demon piercing Paul's flesh. He was not sinning, but the demon was trying to pierce his obedience.

Demons want to pierce us just to keep us from following the purpose of God. The thing we have to keep in mind is that we have a position that is higher than the principalities and powers that try to plague us.

So, in these situations of warfare, this is how we should pray: "Father, because I am positioned higher than the forces of hell, would You please fill me today with the spirit of obedience?"

Often, this spirit of obedience may mean that I am to stay silent. At other times, it means having fun by making up a song. "Speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord" (Ephesians 5:19).

It is a beautiful thing to have the balance of divine diversity with the joy of the Lord as our strength. We also have tears and the compassion of God as our expression, with a desire to love and to help people.

Let me tell you, there is nothing like going to sleep when you have lived a day in the spirit of obedience. You just feel so good and so clean all over. "Now ye are clean through the word which I have spoken unto you" (John 15:3). Your heart is purified by faith (Acts 15:9).

Chapter Three

OBEDIENCE MAKES A DIFFERENCE

I love to tell the story of a great couple in our church. They were separated for four years, and I never heard the wife say anything except, "I love him, and we are going to be back together." That was her confession as she walked in obedience before God.

Now, we all knew the husband's heart. He was a sweet man caught up in confusion. But when he got rolling with God, there was no stopping this guy. It was a just a matter of time before he became one of the greatest men of God ever. And he is that, and has been back with his wife for several very happy years, and their family is following after the Lord.

This woman was always very quiet before God. Everything was going to be all right, and she believed that, by faith through grace. Not one time (and I had several brief talks with her)

would she ever say anything negative about her husband. She just would not do it.

Occasionally, I would say to her, “How are you taking it today?”

“Fine,” was always her answer. “I love my husband—everything will work out.”

Once she finally said to me, “If there is anything I want to express about the situation, I express it in prayer to God. Then, I find that I am filled with peace.”

Oh, what beautiful obedience! I wish I could take some of this woman’s spirit and distribute it among people all over our church. It would be such a great thing for the Holy Spirit to do in our midst.

“Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him: but I will maintain mine own ways before him” (Job 13:15). This was that woman’s attitude. How can you defeat someone who obeys God in this way?

Obedience leaves the door open for me to be filled with love. Obedience makes love a reality in my heart for everyone—even for my enemies. Obedience releases love. Obedience expresses integrity. Obedience reveals the divine patience of God.

Obedience leaves us edified and edifying—

edifying others through the meekness of wisdom (James 3:13).

Desire produces an appetite, and an appetite produces a hunger and thirst—a hungering and a thirsting after righteousness. God then takes over with all the rest. We are filled with the One who listens to us when we come to Him.

Obedience Reveals Amazing Grace

God gives us an amazing grace through our desire and hunger. This is how we can see what God's heart is all about. His heart is all about loving everyone. We see God's heart in the story of the prodigal son (Luke 15:11-24).

The father in the parable always had a heart that said, "I want my son to come home. I am just going to wait quietly. I am not going to talk about it, except to God."

Never once did the father talk to anyone about the prodigal. I can guarantee that. The son was out with the whores, partying and squandering all of his inheritance. But the father just kept watching and waiting for his son to come home.

Every morning the father thought, "Could this be the day my son comes home?" Personally, I think the father staked out a spot where he

could see as far as possible. He wanted the best view that he could have so he could see anyone drawing near to his house.

Then the day came when he saw his son in the distance.

“There he is!” the father must have shouted. Then, the father ran to meet him. He ran. He grabbed his son and kissed his neck again and again. He never talked about the son while he was gone. He could not wait to hug him. The son tried his best to confess his sin, but the father would not listen to that. He just wanted to fetch the new shoes, the precious ring, and a clean robe to put on his son who had come home.

It was time for a real party now. There was a great celebration because obedient faith released forgiveness.

Faith purifies our hearts. Obedience reveals the dynamics of God’s divine characteristics of His resurrection life.

A Life of Buds, Blossoms, and Blooms

The frosty cold of death is challenged by the sunlight of resurrection life. Every single child of God is budding. The flowers are already budding in many areas of our lives. In some areas,

there are already blooms and blossoms. There is the budding, the blooming, the blossoming, and the beautiful full growth of the flower.

I love to look at believers who are filled with the great things that are budding in their lives. They have not reached their full potential or their full purpose, but they are budding. Resurrection life is bringing out the dynamics of obedience in them.

My prayer for those who are not budding is for God to create in them a capacity for obedience in resurrection power. I never want to talk about them. They can talk about me all that they please, but I will talk about them on my knees.

I can barely wait for the day to see them living in obedience as they blossom into full-grown, mature, grace-filled believers. The fruit of obedience will bring glory to God, it will edify the Body of Christ, and it will seek and save the lost. That is the heart of God and the whole purpose of our lives.

CONCLUSION

It is quite a thing to be a little creature on the earth, living in a body of death and a body of sin. Every member of the human race has an old sin nature. It is amazing how we get to know brothers and sisters throughout the different parts of the world who have the same desire to love God, to love each other, and to reach the lost.

The key to obedience is to start every day with God. Just come to the Lord and say, "Hello, Lord. Oh, God, I love You. This is just another one of Your children coming to You, wanting to be blessed through an intimate relationship with You.

Dear Father, I want to bless You through our relationship. Lord Jesus, thank You for Your obedience to the plan of Redemption. Please, Holy Spirit, fill me. I know You will do that in an instant. Thank You, and please help me to obey the Truth. I want to obey the Truth, the inner Truth, with my entire being—

with my unconscious, subconscious, and conscious mind.

When I wake up in the morning, quicken me to get on my knees to say, It is time for me to praise You, Lord. I am not going to ask You for anything. I am just going to praise You. I am amazed by what You have done through my family and my extended family. I can hardly believe it. It is rarely heard of. We have so many strong friends and strong body members in our church, and it is a joy for us to live in outstanding obedience. Thank You, from the bottom of my heart. In Jesus precious name, Amen.